



## Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).

# THE SIMULTANEOUS NEWSPAPERS OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY.

BY ALFRED HARMSWORTH, EDITOR OF THE LONDON "DAILY MAIL."

---

THE comparatively slight progress that has been made in the development of the newspaper during the last hundred years inclines one to the belief that we are still merely at the fringe of journalistic development.

The newspaper as an institution is an essentially modern outgrowth of civilization. The earliest British example is seen in *The Courant, or Weekly News*, of 1621. Less than three hundred years old, the Press is a thing of yesterday when compared with the Theatre, which had reached a high stage of development long before the Christian era; or with the Parliament, which in one form or another existed among the most ancient civilizations.

In America, the issue of the pioneer paper, *Publick Occurrences, both Foreign and Domestick*, from a Boston press in 1690, marked the birth of that vast newspaper enterprise which makes such an impression upon the Englishman who crosses the Atlantic for the first time. The fact that the little news-sheet was promptly suppressed by the authorities of Massachusetts forms a curious commentary on the subsequent extraordinary growth of periodical literature in the United States.

Fourteen years later, on April 24, 1704, *The Boston News-Letter* was established.

The report of the Tenth Census, published in 1884, showed twenty-nine daily journals published in the city of New York, as against twenty-eight at that time published in London.

Having in view the vast supply of morning, evening, weekly and Sunday editions, employing scores of thousands of workers and consuming millions of tons of paper, my assertion that the newspaper Press has shown comparatively slight development dur-

ing the past century may, perhaps, seem paradoxical, and be met with considerable incredulity. But I maintain that, considering the fact that practically every new invention of real importance is sooner or later called into the service of newspaper production in one way or another, the development has been less than might reasonably have been expected.

Telegraphy, telephony, electrotyping, process engraving, rapid transit both by land and water—all these, and a host of other inventions, have been applied in one way or another to the newspaper, and yet newspapers have not exhibited such rapidity of progress in mechanical matters as is seen in the evolution of the up-to-date battleship, or such perfection of organization as has been attained by one or other of the greater American Trusts.

To the enthusiastic American temperament—which does not worry about the past, considers the present altogether delightful, and takes the most optimistic view possible of the future—these remarks may come somewhat as a surprise.

“No progress indeed!”—I can imagine the tone of indignant protest. “Look at the rotary press, the mechanical typesetter, the lightning stereotyping box, the use of the cablegram, of wood pulp, the development of the ‘interview,’ the equipment regardless of cost of the war correspondent with his special despatch boat and his despatch riders, the more popular presentation of news and ideas, and last, but not least, the abundant use of illustrations!”

But many of the developments just referred to by my supposed objector are not altogether new, and some of them are not unmixed blessings, as, for example, the last of them—the illustrations which are so much in fashion nowadays.

I venture to think that twenty years hence, if illustrations are then as frequent a feature of purely news journals—which I greatly doubt—the present day newspaper picture will seem to our sons as great a curiosity as does to us a copy of the *London Morning Post* or the *New York Advertiser* of a hundred years ago.

An occasional newspaper illustration, if it can be properly produced, is no doubt a good thing, and is appreciated as helpful by the reader; but many of the present-day illustrations are quite unnecessary, and are merely given as a matter of habit, or because rival journals use them, or even for the less urgent reasons

that there is a certain amount of space to be decorated and artists or photographers to be kept occupied.

The political cartoons and fashion plates are often excellent; but, when portraits are attempted, the result is usually unrecognizable, if not absolutely grotesque. Even when half-tone engravings are employed, the present imperfections of the printing press often reduce them to mere smudges. No daily journal which relies principally upon its illustrations has been, in any real sense, an overwhelming success. Even the genius and untiring labor of the late Mr. Thomas could not raise the *Daily Graphic* of London to such a high-water mark of success as its weekly namesake.

The fact is that newspapers throughout the whole world have gone on imitating each other for many years past, with here and there a minute and superficial improvement or alteration, which is heralded as a great stroke of originality. When a new journal appears—after a prolonged period of sensational promises—one turns to it in the hope of finding something really novel, something that will compel other newspaper proprietors and editors to seriously consider their ways—but only to be once more disappointed. The new arrival is “new” only in title and in the personnel of its staff. In matter, style, news and form of production it is only a more or less colorable imitation of some existing journal, and we have just one more newspaper of the old orthodox type.

Some of us have not yet realized the fact that the ordinary news-sheet is hopelessly clumsy in shape, verbose as to matter, and most imperfect as a record. I am not attacking the Press of any particular country, nor do I except any one country from my statement; the differences between the newspapers of different countries are very slight, certainly not so great as the contrast in the laying out of their cities, in the general appearance, for instance, of such centres as New York, London and Paris. This is certainly a noteworthy phenomenon, when one realizes the distinctions in temperament, modes of thought and methods of action which exist between the leading nations of the world.

With the newspapers of the whole civilized world before me each week, I look in vain for any great and impressive stroke of originality or daring. We still cling to the clumsy and awkward shape in which our newspapers are issued, and the man who has attempted to manipulate one of them on a windy day will best

appreciate the force of my remarks. Why should this relic of the days of the old and slow flat printing-press still inconvenience us daily? By the use of improved machinery it would be possible to issue the newspaper of the future in what is obviously its proper form—a small, portable and neatly indexed publication of the size of page of the *NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW*, and of the bulk and appearance of the *New York Outlook*, the best of weekly reviews. Something of the kind has been done in Germany, and one proposal to issue a daily journal in handy form was made in England (by Mr. Stead), but fell through.

Probably, the inherent conservatism which shows itself in men of all nationalities has something to do with the general attitude regarding this not unimportant question of shape; but this is a poor excuse at best. It will not satisfy the newspaper reader of the twentieth century.

The journals of the principal countries present at first sight certain strong contrasts, but a little examination proves that these are superficial and apparent rather than real.

To the Englishman who goes to America for the first time, some of the newspapers seem to be outrages on the public taste, and all of them to be arranged on a principle difficult for him to grasp at the outset. But after a very short acquaintance he is able to find his way about the American newspaper without much trouble, and he begins to feel at home in it. Sooner or later, the fact dawns upon him that it is practically the same as his newspaper at home, the differences lying mainly in its unwieldy bulk, "scare headlines," and a greater directness of style.

When the American comes to England, the British journal sits as heavily upon him as does the British climate. I have often watched him twisting and turning one of these great, big, dull puzzles of ours, yearning for the little home news that he may, or may not, find buried there, and thoroughly disgusted with what he considers the lack of arrangement, and even of news itself. But, as in the case of the Englishman, he soon discovers that the news is there very much as in his own familiar journal. The chief difference lies in the fact that it does not stand prominently out on the page and strike his eye at a first glance.

Turning to the German Press, one finds that, although as a rule very accurate, and in some cases issued in a far more handy form than the familiar "blanket sheet" with which most of us

wrestle at our breakfast tables, it is, as a whole, stupendously heavy. In the words of Mr. Charles A. Dana, no mean critic:

"There are very few first-rate papers in Germany, not one anywhere which is to be compared to the American newspaper in the variety of news that it furnishes, in the amount of resources that are applied to it, or generally in the ability with which it is conducted. The German newspapers are like the German learned men, exceedingly learned, but not always in contact with the living sentiment of the people. They pursue their own theories, remote from the people, and do not feel their pulse and know their thoughts and understand their part at all times."

Among the newspapers that, in my opinion, are now making real progress, setting aside their entire lack of commercial morality, are some of the French journals. They have always been noted for their high literary excellence. The anonymous editorial has never been a particularly strong feature of the French newspaper. On the other hand, pure literature, in the shape of fiction or criticism, has been one of its chief characteristics. Nearly every French man of letters since the Revolution—and to some extent before—has been a regular or occasional writer for the Press. One has only to mention, among noted French journalists, such men as Marat, Mirabeau, Brissot, Camille Desmoulins, Sainte-Beuve, and, in more recent days, Thiers, Lemaitre, Sandeau, Zola and M. Brunetière, to call to the reader's mind the names of many others that might be enumerated. The French papers are now adding to their pre-eminent literary excellence very good news-services. For example, *Le Matin* is in many ways a better-written newspaper than is issued either in the United States or in Great Britain. In addition to its own news, it gives practically the whole news-service of the London *Times*.

One of the chief reasons for the slow progress of modern journalism may be due to the undoubted fact that, with brilliant exceptions, the best brains of the Anglo-Saxon countries have not hitherto gone into the profession of journalism, or have left it after a somewhat brief career. In Great Britain, they generally find their way to the Bar or into the public service. Notable examples of this process may be seen in the cases of Mr. John Morley, who left an editorial chair for a seat in the Cabinet, and of Sir Alfred Milner, who, after a somewhat brief career on the *Fall Mall Gazette*, entered a Government office, and is now Governor of Cape Colony and High Commissioner of South Africa.

One might also mention Lord Salisbury, who, in his younger days, was a writer for the daily Press. In passing, it is impossible to avoid lamenting the loss which British journalism sustains in the fact that Lord Rosebery's unrivalled powers as a critic, debater and organizer are not at its disposal.

While the Bar and the public service have stolen so many of our best men in England, business and politics have proved equally attractive on the other side of the Atlantic.

I have sometimes thought, and I have been severely admonished for making the suggestion, that British and American newspapers are not always equal to the average intelligence of their readers. Possibly, this is one of the reasons why, among the more educated classes, newspaper opinion carries weight merely because of its known influence on the gentleman whom in England we call "the man in the street." It is commonly supposed that the individual just alluded to has no interest in literature, that he would rather read the language he is accustomed to speak, and that a slangy colloquial style has most charms for him. Now, while it is undoubtedly true that the ponderous and involved style adopted by some British newspaper writers of repute is not at all to his liking, I do not think that any such sweeping assertion can fairly be made. It is certainly the case that the average newspaper reader has shown his appreciation of writers like Rudyard Kipling and Andrew Lang, and still more emphatically of G. W. Steevens, whose recent death in South Africa called forth eloquent tributes from both sides of the Atlantic.

Is the "power of the Press" what it was?

With all its world-wide dissemination of facts and opinions, I am certain that the influence of the newspaper has not grown during recent years. In England, the gradually disappearing editorial—or "leader," as we term it—formerly possessed great weight. It was read and quoted by all men of intelligence. A large proportion—probably the majority—of Englishmen formed their views by the pronouncements of their favorite papers. The editor and the leader-writer controlled much of the thinking of the nation. This is certainly the case no longer. I greatly doubt if one newspaper reader in fifty condescends even to glance at the article which presents him with a well-considered judgment on some important questions of the day. The great cry is for news. The latest telegrams and reports are the first things that are read.

But even here the Press has lost in reputation. Lately, there has begun a kind of internecine warfare between the various organs of the Press, by which they very largely injure their own positions and that of their opponents. An item of news published in one paper is immediately discredited in another, and the public, naturally enough, comes to the opinion that newspapers are usually inaccurate, and too often dismiss a perfectly correct statement as mere "newspaper talk." It is highly probable that the craze for collecting more news if possible than one's contemporaries has something to do with this. I may be pardoned for saying that the newspapers of America seem to me to devote far too much space to news items altogether trivial and unworthy of publication. As Mr. Charles Dudley Warner said:

"The journal must cease to be a sort of waste-basket at the end of a telegraph wire, into which any reporter, telegraph operator, or gossip-monger can dump whatever he pleases. We must get rid of the superstition that value is given to an unimportant 'item' by sending it a thousand miles over a wire."

In England, where the newspaper is still treated very seriously by a large section of the public, this sort of thing is beginning, but it will probably not go far.

It needs to be pointed out, too, that the mere multiplication of newspapers, and the speed with which one set of views is controverted, or an item of news contradicted, tends very largely to the destruction of what is called "the power of the Press."

Prince Bismarck, in a cynical moment—probably irritated by an editorial opposing his policy—once defined journalism as nothing more than printing ink on paper. But his belittlement of the Press needs to be read in the light of the fact, that never in the whole history of statesmanship has any man made more constant and effectual use of the Press than did Prince Bismarck himself. His scornful dictum may be disregarded; but there is a very real danger lest the public may come to a similar valuation of newspapers. The public craving for sensation, and the competition that makes every editor eager, if possible, to produce a more imposing budget of news than his rivals, are undoubtedly answerable for much that has tended to undermine the influence of the Press.

The question what to put before the public, and in what manner to place it before them, is one that calls for the keenest acumen and best judgment on the part of the newspaper director. Here,



undoubtedly, the Press of the United States is in advance of that of Great Britain. Such newspaper leaders as Pulitzer, Dana, Bennett, Hearst, Raymond, Jones, Childs, Medill, Lawson, Russell, Cummings, Taylor, Pulsifer, Halstead, Patterson, De Young, Singerley, Godkin, Greeley, McKelway, Watterson and Wilbur Storey have had but few counterparts with us. The instinct that tells what is news, and how the public will best take it, is not given to every writer. There is a great art in feeling the pulse of the people.

Probably another secret of the waning influence of the newspaper is to be found in its wearisome prolixity. Our age is a busy one, and men work at a pressure hitherto unknown. They cannot afford the time to wade through a column of verbose descriptive matter in search of a problematical item of news. This is becoming more and more recognized in America, where the brief, "snappy" style and the informative headline have their native place. But the information afforded by the headline should find confirmation in the paragraphs that follow.

It must not, however, be supposed that, because I have passed this criticism upon the Press of the nineteenth century, I take any gloomy or pessimistic view of the future. On the contrary, the future of journalism in the twentieth century impresses me as being full of hopefulness. There are abundant signs that we are witnessing the birth of developments in newspaper enterprise which will make the past look insignificant by contrast. To predict with certainty the precise form that will be taken by those developments would call for the gifts of the prophet or the seer; but there are certain tendencies among us to-day which have come to stay, and I am strongly of opinion that behind them lie the forces which will direct the future growth and shape of newspaper enterprise.

We are entering the century of combination and centralization. For good or for ill, the day of the small trader is past, and that of the great emporium has come. The tendency is for large corporations to absorb the individual. I do not say that this is the best possible state of things; I only refer to it as a fact to be dealt with. I feel certain that the newspaper of the twentieth century will be drawn into the vortex of combination and centralization. In fact, given the man, the capital, the organization, and the occasion, there seems to be no reason why one or two newspapers

may not presently dominate great sections of the United States, or almost the whole of Great Britain. In other words, where there are now a multitude of papers—good, bad and indifferent—there will be then one or two great journals.

I do not know whether the thing could be done in a lifetime, for such an organization would necessarily be of slow growth, but I have no doubt that it could be done; the project is already forming itself in a humble way on both sides of the Atlantic. In the United States, Mr. Hearst is issuing his *American* in Chicago, his *Examiner* in San Francisco, and his *Journal* in New York. In England, I may be allowed to point to my own newspaper, which is published simultaneously each day in London and Manchester, two great centres of population two hundred miles apart, and, by means of my own railroad trains, is read at breakfast tables five hundred miles apart each morning. It will also be known to most Americans that Mr. Pulitzer has two papers, and that the *Galveston News* is published simultaneously at Dallas and Galveston in Texas.

Though not bearing on my scheme, a remarkable instance is that of Mr. Bennett, who publishes his journal simultaneously in two continents, with the Atlantic rolling between. Thus the views of the New York *Herald* are spread throughout Europe each day, almost as rapidly and effectively as they are in the United States. In passing, one should remark that Mr. Bennett has adopted the singular but not unwise policy of conducting his American newspaper in Europe, whereby he not only secures the best news-service of any United States journal, but by persistent personal effort is able to wield a very considerable influence on European politics as they are affected by those of America, and *vice versa*.

To a mere theorist, such a simultaneous issue of a newspaper in a dozen centres, separated by hundreds or even thousands of miles, would seem to be fraught with difficulties so great as to exclude it from the arena of practical effort. But experience, both in America and in Great Britain, has proved that these difficulties—as is usually the case in everyday working life—melt into thin air when they are resolutely faced by the man who means to surmount them. So far as the plan has been tried by practical journalists, backed by sufficient capital, it has been found to work smoothly, economically and practically.

I wish to emphasize this point. The suggestion for a simul-

taneously published paper—national in its truest sense—is not the dream of a visionary, nor the outcome of a heated imagination. It has been practically tried, not on the large scale that I shall proceed to outline, but locally and sectionally. Chapter and verse in the history of modern journalism can be produced in proof of the feasibility of all that is here asserted.

My idea of the newspaper of the twentieth century may be thus expressed in brief. Let us suppose one of the great American newspapers—say *The Sun*, of New York, in my opinion perhaps the best arranged of all American newspapers—under the control of a man of the journalistic ability of Delane, the greatest of the former editors of the London *Times*, certainly the greatest political editor in the history of journalism, backed by an organization as perfect as that of the Standard Oil Company, and issued simultaneously each morning in (say) New York, Boston, Chicago, Pittsburg, St. Louis, Philadelphia, and other points in America; or at London, Liverpool, Manchester, Bristol, Edinburgh, Belfast and Newcastle, in Great Britain. Is it not obvious that the power of such a paper might become such as we have not yet seen in the history of the Press? And would not such a journal effectually revive the waning influence of the newspaper upon the life and thought of the nation?

The thing is not so improbable as it sounds. The whole tendency of the times, both in America and Great Britain, is toward the concentration of great affairs in the hands of a few. I may perhaps say without offense that the power of the British Parliament is now practically concentrated in the hands of one family, the Cecils, of whom the Marquis of Salisbury is the distinguished head. They, and one or two allies, form an inner ring which dominates the Cabinet, which in its turn rules Parliament.

The control of our railways is now centred in a small organization composed of the heads of those railways, holding regular meetings and working in unison.

Whenever I wend my way along one of our leafy English lanes, and encounter the hideous wagon marked “The Anglo-American Oil Company”—the English name for the Standard Oil Company—it comes forcibly to my mind that what a Rockefeller can do in the matter of oil, with its hundred and one adjuncts, another Trust could effect in the way of news.

Such an organization, or combination, with its forty or fifty

simultaneously published journals, each adapted to its particular locality, could dominate the newspaper situation as effectively as Mr. Rockefeller and his able colleagues control the illumination of the British farm laborer's cottage.

But how could such a multiple newspaper come into existence? Obviously, it would have to be initiated by some man, or group of men, holding practically unlimited capital, and possessing intimate knowledge of everything appertaining to the journalism of their country. Such a group might easily be formed of the directors of three or four leading papers of New York or London, forced to an unwilling friendship by the desire to escape competition. By combining their forces, they would be in a position to command the situation.

In my opinion, their first steps would be to buy the best brains, newspapers and machinery, to construct private telegraph wires and cables, or—where existing monopolies for the time prevented that course—to purchase the exclusive or preferential use of the wires. That this can be done is within the knowledge of every newspaper man. The immediate result would be that the journals owned by this combination would secure such capital, such a news service and other advantages that their rivals would be seriously incommoded.

The power to undersell would drive many newspapers into the combination, and little by little rival newspapers would be so weakened that, where they did not die a natural death, their purchase or absorption would be a comparatively easy and inexpensive step. The less important ones would be allowed to drop out of existence, but the others would continue to appear in their old form, but containing much identical news matter, and, of course, under the control of the combination.

By this time the wealth and influence of the combination would have grown to such an extent that opposition would be as futile as it has been in other fields. Backed by the acknowledged facts of an ever-growing circulation, an unlimited capital, and a practical monopoly of all the best writers and news-services of the whole world, the directors of the simultaneous newspaper could carry all before them. After the fashion of the great commercial Trusts of the United States, they could simply stamp out opposition and rivalry. It would be in their power to give any rival newspaper concern the option of either combining with them,

selling out, or facing financial disaster. They would be able to practically force their own journal upon any city or district. They would hold the newspaper monopoly of the land.

I do not say that such a state of things would be the best possible, either for journalism or for the community. Personally, I should oppose it very vigorously. The history of great Trusts shows that the question is a many-sided one. But I do say that the thing is practicable, and—unless I altogether mistake the signs of the times—it is beginning!

There would be practically no limit to the possibilities of such a development. Possessing its own cables, wires, despatch boats and special trains, the simultaneous newspaper concern would soon have its own paper mills, printing-ink factories, machinery shops and the like; this is already partly true of the *London Times* and other leading journals. It would probably take the control of all railway and street news-stands, and by persistent and overwhelming pressure would compel all news-agents to accept the position of agents of the combine.

All this would involve simultaneous publication in the great centres of population. Distribution over a wide area by means of special newspaper trains has its obvious limitations. It is practicable in England, but would be out of the question in presence of the much greater distances of America. It is of vital importance that the journal should be on sale early and punctually. Distribution by railways is always subject to the contingencies of accident or delay on the line.

The case would be met by the existence of an adequate number of editorial and publishing offices, so distributed among the great centres of population as to be in close touch with all parts of the country, and all connected directly, by special telegraph and telephone wires, with the central office, which would be a great news-distributing agency, as well as the seat of control. My own experience, and that of others, shows that there is no practical difficulty in the way of telegraphing the entire contents of the paper to a distant branch office, where it is set up in exact *fac simile* of the London issue, with the addition of local news, and published simultaneously. It would, of course, be essential to pay adequate attention to this local news. This would involve, as with my own paper, the existence of a local news editor, with his assistants and a staff of reporters, in each centre. The simul-

taneous newspaper would be so arranged as to provide space for a given number of columns of local news. This could, of course, be increased or diminished as occasion required.

In a simple form, this kind of thing already exists in Great Britain and in America. The smaller local weeklies are seldom of purely local production. With us the whole of the newspaper, with the exception of the middle opening, is edited, set up and printed in London, and is then sent in sheets to the various towns, where a local staff insert the news items and advertisements of the district, and publish the paper. This is not a very high type of journalism, but it works well, and supplies a better service than could be obtained by the local staff alone.

The local editorial staffs, as with my journal, would also act as special correspondents for the metropolitan headquarters. In this way an organized and capable local news service would be substituted for the present method of employing some local resident to send along any news that he may think suitable—a method which frequently breaks down on an emergency, and at best is but a casual and haphazard one. Thus, there would still be abundant scope and employment for the most capable journalists of the nation.

What may be termed the floating journalism of the country would also be absorbed by the simultaneous newspaper. The “free lance,” instead of scattering his “copy” broadcast, would, perforce, send it to the combination, through sheer lack of anywhere else to place it. Now, although this free lance work varies greatly in quality, there is always a sufficient proportion of good, and even brilliant, matter to make the asset a valuable one.

Probably, the development of the simultaneous newspaper, with its unlimited advertising powers, would soon result in a number of subsidiary weekly journals and magazines. A weekly edition, or a weekly supplement of miscellaneous matter—something after the fashion of the Sunday editions of the New York newspapers—would soon follow, and the establishment of a weekly illustrated journal of the highest class would be an obvious corollary.

A monopoly of the news-service would almost necessitate a series of weekly supplements, or associated publications, to deal with special subjects. Religion, science, education, finance, commerce, sport, law, medicine, and a host of other subjects of im-

portance to different sections of the community, would call for more adequate treatment than is possible in the columns of a daily newspaper. My subsidiary journals and magazines already exceed thirty in number, and include evening, weekly and monthly publications.

The simultaneous journal might with advantage be issued in three different forms daily in the more important cities. There would, of course, be the familiar morning and evening editions.

Such a national newspaper would have unrivalled powers of organization in all directions. It is no uncommon thing already for a great journal to equip a scientific expedition, to raise a war fund, or to carry through some great charitable enterprise. The admirable work done in this way by many of the leading American newspapers is too familiar to need further description here. Similar work has been done from time to time in Great Britain.

The simultaneous newspaper would possess powers of this kind which we can hardly estimate, and, under the direction of men whose inclinations turned that way, would very possibly become the centre of a vast network of societies, organizations and institutions.

It is, perhaps, unnecessary to carry further this outline of the possible—and, as I think, the probable—development of newspaper enterprise in the twentieth century. As I have already stated, the principle of such a combination is no new one, and, in detail and at various times, nearly all that is here suggested has been successfully carried out.

It may, however, be objected at this point that the public as a whole is not enamored of Trusts, and would not view such a newspaper combination with any large degree of approval. This may be true enough. I am not recommending Trusts. I am quite alive to the darker side of their history. But I hardly see how the public could prevent the development of a newspaper monopoly. The initial stages would be accomplished without any great publicity, and when once an exclusive news-service had been secured, the rest would follow as a necessary consequence. People would not consign themselves to a condition of total ignorance of all news simply because they objected to a monopoly. To refer to an illustration already used, as long as the oil in the lamp gives a good light and costs a moderate figure, people do not

greatly trouble themselves about the Standard Oil Company and its methods.

At this point, it may be well to say something about the advantages and disadvantages which would follow upon the establishment of a simultaneously published national newspaper, holding a monopoly of the Press. To quote Mr. Charles A. Dana again:

"The modern newspaper literally has its fingers reaching out toward every quarter of the globe, and every finger is sensitive, and every nerve brings back the treasures of intellectual wealth that are stored up there, and a photograph of the occurrences of life that are there taking place."

This finely worded description is not at all exaggerated, but it will be still more true of the simultaneous newspaper of the future, with its unique news-service and its unrivalled opportunities for publicity.

In other words, we shall see—or our children will see—journalism brought to a standard of excellence hitherto unattained. I suppose that perfection will still lie ahead even then, but it is hard to see how the situation could be improved upon. The simultaneous newspaper combination will possess the ablest directors, the most skillful editors, the most brilliant writers, and a monopoly of the news-service. Being its own manufacturer, it will work with the best materials, and, possessing vast resources, it will be able to accept a narrow margin of profit, and thus give the public greater value for their money. By the method of simultaneous publication the provincial purchaser will be placed on an equal footing with the dweller in the capital. As things are, he must either be content with an inferior local production, or wait till late in the day, when the great newspaper arrives by the mail or comes on the cars. Under the new régime he will find the national journal on his breakfast table.

In my opinion, the newspaper that I am describing will be able to maintain a higher tone and literary standard than is usually possible now. It will be able to ignore what may be called "non-news." I refer to the trivial and unimportant items and to the unedifying matter which every editor heartily longs to omit. Critics unacquainted with the Press often ask why all this unnecessary matter is not cast into the waste-paper basket. The answer lies in the existing rivalry and competition between



newspapers. If an editor omits all mention of some sensational but unelevating police case, for example, he knows full well that his rival will insert it, and will subsequently boast about his superior news-service! No editor can afford to let even the most superficial critic imagine that he has been caught napping. On the other hand, a newspaper possessing a monopoly could absolutely boycott all such items. I lay strong emphasis upon this, as it affords a solution to a problem that has long troubled all journalists who seek the best interests of the public.

Such a newspaper could maintain a high literary tone, and thus become an educative institution of the greatest value. This is true already of the best journals in most lands, but there is another side to the question. The existence of a gutter Press cannot altogether be ignored. Neither can we afford to neglect the fact that a considerable section of the public patronizes it. The new régime of journalism will promptly put an end to it, and will thus confer an additional benefit on the nation. The simultaneous newspaper will dominate the thought of the country, not so much by its editorials—if editorials continue to be written—as by its general style and tone. In the words of Mr. Charles Dudley Warner:

“Editorial influence is not dogmatic and direct. The editor does not expect to form public opinion so much by arguments and appeals as by the news he presents and his manner of presenting it, by the iteration of an idea until it becomes familiar, by the reading matter selected, and by the quotation of opinions as news, and not professedly to influence the reader. And this influence is all the more potent because it is indirect, and not perceived by the reader.”

Mr. Pulitzer’s wonderful stroke of journalistic genius in connection with the Bond issue, Mr. Hearst’s successful appeal to the people on the war issue between the United States and Spain, and the work of British newspapers in connection with the South African campaign, go to show what can be done in the direction of influencing public opinion even under existing circumstances. Imagine, then, the influence which would be exerted if an overwhelming majority of the newspapers in the United States spoke with the same voice, supported the same principles, and enunciated the same policy! Such a state of things would be a terror to evil-doers and to the supporters of anything inimical to the commonwealth. Napoleon once remarked: “Four hostile newspapers are more to be feared than a thousand bayonets.” But a

hostile Press, issued simultaneously throughout the land, would be simply irresistible.

It has been suggested to me that such an influence, if allowed to run counter to the general opinion of the nation, would result in an intolerable *impasse*. But I do not think such a thing would ever occur, for the simple reason that such a newspaper organization could only be carried out in the hands of thoroughly capable journalists. Mere capital, apart from journalistic ability, has never yet created a successful journal, and I am certain that it could never bring into being a simultaneous newspaper. Now, one of the prime essentials of a good newspaper leader is that he should be in intimate touch with his public. His finger must be on the pulse of the people, and his ear must be ever listening to their voice. He must be quick to note the smallest happenings which indicate the trend of public thought. A journal so demented as to purposely run counter to the honest feeling of the nation would soon have to file its petition and pass out into oblivion. The same would be true of a simultaneous newspaper.

But what side would this great newspaper Trust take in party politics? I do not think it would be called upon to assume a mere party attitude at all. The London *Times* is supposed to support the Government and the party in power at the time, on the ground that the party returned at the polls represents the will of the people. This principle is a sound one. It is not at all necessary that an influential journal should be a party organ. Some of the most successful in Great Britain at the present time are entirely independent of party, and simply aim at expressing the mind of the people. It may be added that nearly all the leading journals of Great Britain at the present day support the Unionist Government. The Radical Press, though highly respectable, is not very influential now.

I think that one of the good influences of a great newspaper monopoly would be seen in its tendency to minimize political differences and to bring about unity of thought and action. Much of the party feeling of the present day, on both sides of the Atlantic, is fed and fostered by certain inflammatory newspapers that depend upon political agitation for their circulation. This consideration would not affect the simultaneous journal, which would be free to advocate the best interests of the country, and

could do so with an influence far wider in its scope than has hitherto been possible.

As far back as 1863, the London *Times* enjoyed almost a monopoly of circulation and publicity. In that year Mr. Cobden drew Mr. Delane's attention to the fact that "four-fifths of the daily newspaper circulation issued from its press." I am not sure that it was at all a bad thing for the country. One strong paper of high tone can do more than a score of party publications daily engaged in quarreling with one another. The influence of the simultaneous newspaper upon Congress and the various local authorities would be effectual just so long as the journal continued to express the mind of the nation. We thus arrive practically at Government by Newspapers, but so long as that is only another name for Government by the People, no one need be alarmed at the outlook.

Thus far, the prospect is a decidedly attractive one, both for the journalist and the public. It would be easy to proceed much further and to indicate wider and more startling developments that might await the simultaneous journal. But it is seldom wise to indulge in dreams, and I have thought it better to confine myself strictly to developments which experiment has proved to be thoroughly practicable.

It is fair to add that, as the most wholesome food may under some circumstances turn to poison, so a great newspaper monopoly might, in bad hands, become nothing less than a national disaster. All would depend very largely upon the man or men at the head of it. In the hands of a weak man—still more so in the hands of an unprincipled one—such an influence might work great mischief.

But I am a firm believer in the sound sense and practical power of the people. Public sentiment has often forced the hand of the politician and brought effectual pressure to bear even upon monopolists. It would not be less potent in the case of a corrupt and mischievous Press.

Doubtless, the idea of another Trust is not a popular one. Experience of monopolies has not made us love them. They generally tend to raise the price and to lower the quality of the article they control. I do not think, however, that this would necessarily be the case with a national newspaper combination. Practical journalism is a very different thing from a corner in

pork or a deal in oil. It so essentially lives upon the approval of the public that any attempt to abuse its position would only recoil upon itself. People are not obliged to buy newspapers, as they are in the case of food-stuffs and clothing.

It may also be objected that the establishment of a great newspaper combination, ultimately absorbing or destroying all its rivals, would be a fatal blow at the freedom of the Press. I do not see the force of this. The Press would be raised to so commanding a position that its freedom would be greater than ever. One must remember that the freedom of the Press does not mean a license to say what we please, or to do whatever we like; but a freedom from outside interference or censorship. In my opinion, the party journals of the present day possess far less freedom than the simultaneous newspapers of the twentieth century will enjoy.

Let me repeat, however, that I am not advocating newspaper monopolies. I am only pointing out that they are practicable, and will probably soon become important factors in journalistic life.

I am profoundly hopeful of the future. I am convinced that the Press has its best days to come. Already, it is in touch with the people to an extent never attained before. Already, its influence has spread into the secret council chamber, as well as into the laborer's cottage. Already, it is leaving behind what is effete and antiquated, and is keeping step with the march of a progressive age. Already, it is casting off the domination of party and the serfdom of tradition, and has set its face steadfastly toward the light. And to this advance—a happy forecast of even better things to come—the enterprising and enlightened Press of America has contributed in no mean measure.

Journalism, though but a thing of yesterday, now overshadows the earth. The old Norse fable of the tree Ygdrasil, on whose leaves were written the scenes of the life of man, has been said to find a kind of fulfilment in the rustle of the myriad leaves of the world's Press, unfolded afresh every morning.

For good or ill, I believe its trend to be in the direction I have indicated, though it is unlikely that the complete newspaper monopoly will arise in the earlier end of the new century.

ALFRED HARMSWORTH.